

ARTICLE VIII.

HOMER AND THE HIGHER CRITICS.

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM WALLACE EVERTS, BOSTON, MASS.

THE higher criticism of Homer and the "Iliad" forms a startling and perfect parallel to the course of the higher criticism of Moses and the Pentateuch. The reader is asked to think of Wellhausen whenever Wolf is mentioned, and to think of fragments and documents when lays are referred to. With this parallel in mind this article should have a double interest.

The unity of the Iliad, the consecutiveness of the story, its climaxes, its ancient dialect, its stately meter, and its grand style, all alike point to one master mind as its creator. Plato called Homer the author of the Iliad and said that he was the educator of Greece; Aristotle spoke of him as the only poet who knew his business. Herodotus told when he lived, and Thucydides quoted him as the chief authority on early Greek History. The grammarians of Alexandria made painstaking commentaries on his language. The dramatists, the artists, the Greek race, drew their inspiration from his great epics. The common belief that Homer wrote the Iliad is hardly called in question until the year 1795, when Frederick A. Wolf, a professor at Halle, opposed the almost unanimous verdict of the past, and set up his opinion that Homer could not have written the Iliad.

There were three currents of European thought at that time that helped to carry forward his paradox. One was the

new interest in classical studies, awakened partly by the discovery of ancient frescos and statuary at Pompeii, and advanced especially by Winckelmann in art, and by Lessing in letters. When Lessing's "Laocoön" appeared in 1766, the young poet Herder read it through three times in succession. Schiller and Goethe took themes for their poems from the classics. It was a second renaissance in Germany. With this revived interest in classical studies, Wolf's elaborate Prolegomena to the Iliad, at whatever conclusions the writer may have arrived, was sure of an enthusiastic welcome.

Another strong current of thought at that time appeared in the critical philosophy of Kant and the skeptical theology of Semler. Kant denied the validity of the commonly accepted proofs of the existence of God and of immortality. His keen criticism examined the foundations of all institutions. It became the fashion to call in question traditions of every kind. The *consensus gentium* was disregarded, nothing was so sacred as to escape investigation. An effort was made to reconstruct history. Schleiermacher concluded, when a youth, that all ancient authors were supposititious. Hume declared that the first page of Thucydides was the beginning of history. De Beaufort called in question the trustworthiness of the first five centuries of Roman History. It was in the year 1753 that Astruc, the French physician, published his analysis of the Hebrew text of Genesis, and claimed that he had retraced its constituent parts to their original authors. The very name "Higher Criticism" originated in the year 1780 with the rationalist Eichhorn. One of the few men who influenced Wolf was Semler, the father of rationalism; the other was the skeptic Lessing, whose picture was the sole ornament of his lecture-room. To an age of doubt, Wolf's doubt as to the existence of Homer was not unacceptable.

A third current of thought in the last half of the eighteenth century is known as romanticism. It is traceable to the English deists, with their reaction against the revelation of the Bible and their appeal to the revelation of nature. They were succeeded by Addison, who invented the term "Romantic," and by Thomson with his "Seasons" and Young with his "Night Thoughts," which started the Romantic school in Germany. This reaction was also against the classics in favor of Folk Lore. Just then, in 1750, the "Nibelungenlied" was rediscovered, and in 1766 the Norse "Edda" was published; then followed the "storm and stress" period, which magnified the love of nature. Its literature was Rousseau's "New Heloise," Schiller's "Robbers," and Goethe's "Goetz von Berlichingen." Brentano published folk songs, and Klopstock preferred these free products of the German muse to the conventional classics. The attention of linguists was now turned to the poetry of nature, as opposed to the poetry of art. There was a complete revolution of literary taste in England and Germany. Zoega and Vico apostrophized primitive man and the age when every one was a poet. The savage was idealized as a spontaneous and impromptu singer of beautiful songs. There was a craze for songs that sang themselves, that sprang out of the heart of a race without waiting for an age of culture or for a poetical genius to appear. It was the psychological moment for an impostor to come upon the stage and play upon a credulous age. He came. It was MacPherson with the lays of ancient Ossian. When they appeared in 1762, literary men, already favorably predisposed, received them without question as products of a primitive age, of men in a state of nature. They did not detect MacPherson's imitation of Thomson and Young. Even Klopstock, Herder, and young Goethe were bewitched by them.

The lays of Ossian, supposed to be genuine, led a dull Englishman named Wood to conclude that if Ossian composed in lays, Homer must have composed in lays also. This remarkable conclusion of Wood's was set forth in 1769 in a volume entitled "The Original Genius of Homer." This book appeared in a small edition for circulation among his friends, but a copy reached Hanover, the old home of King George, and there it was reviewed in the most flattering way by Heyne, a professor at Göttingen and at that time the chief classical authority in Germany. With such a commendation, the little book, when translated in 1773, produced a veritable furor among learned men. Wood called attention to Cicero's remark that the scattered books of the Iliad had been put together in order by Pisistratus. Pisistratus he compared to MacPherson, who had gathered and arranged the lays of Ossian. Wood supposed that the Greeks of the heroic age were in a primitive state. He says that Homer never refers to laws, treaties, annals, inscriptions, or letters, and he queried whether Homer could even write. He compared the Iliad, as the poetry of nature, with the lays of Ossian and the Nibelungenlied. The great Heyne, whose whole life was devoted to the study of Greek, acquiesced in Wood's novel views, and declared that the Greeks of the Homeric Age were hardly out of the rough state of nature and were taking the first steps towards civilization. To understand the books of Homer, he said, you must read books of travel among savages. Tiedemann concluded that Homer could not write, and Merian added that if Homer could have written, Pisistratus, the redactor, would have had nothing to do.

With all the learned world wondering whether Homer could write, and encouraged by Astruc's successful discovery

of the original fragments out of which Genesis had been patched together, Wolf undertook to follow Astruc's example and Wood's suggestion, and discover the fragments out of which Pisistratus, as redactor, had patched the Iliad together. If Pisistratus put together the pieces that form the Iliad, as Cicero said he did, why cannot the poem be separated into the original pieces again? If, as Josephus said, the Iliad was originally committed to memory, not to writing, it must have consisted at first of short lays like Ossian's or it could not have been remembered. If, as Wood says, Homer could not write, then it follows that he could not have composed so long a piece as the Iliad. Taking up these hints from Cicero and Josephus, and adopting the conclusions of Astruc and Wood, Wolf published, in the year 1795, his famous "Prolegomena to the Iliad."

Wolf was nothing if not critical. He was in a fight all his life. He fought his teachers from the start. He was angry with Heyne and Herder because they found nothing new in his Prolegomena. He separated from his wife in 1802, and when he removed to Berlin he was in constant strife with his colleagues and the government there. His fierce attack on Dindorf, for anticipating him in publishing an edition of Plato, called forth a printed censure from Niebuhr, Humboldt, Boeckh, Buttmann, and Schleiermacher. Goethe called upon him in 1816 and observed: "He contradicts everything one says, and denies everything that exists." Wolf had the wrath of Achilles, but it was never appeased. His unamiable disposition and uncontrollable temper fitted him not to weigh arguments or to appreciate beauty, but to act with arbitrariness and obstinacy. He lacked the judicial temper. He silenced the protest of his own better judgment in adopting his novel hypotheses.

“When I think [he says] of the one color in these songs, or how the colors harmonize with the song, how the times fit the things, and the things the times, how the same lineaments of genius are present in the chief characters throughout, scarcely any one could be more angry with me than I am with myself. I am driven against my will by historical principles to give up my loved Homer.”

What were his historical principles to which he sacrificed everything? They were Cicero's vague remark that Pisistratus gathered the Homeric poems together, Josephus' intimation that the Iliad was committed to memory, and Wood's double assumption that Homer could not write and that primitive poetry was all, like Ossian's Reliques, composed in short lays. Wolf misunderstood Cicero, misrepresented Josephus, and accepted the conclusions of an amateur like Wood, and then claimed that he had overthrown the old view of the great age of Greek literature and proved that the name Homer should not be associated with a great work of art. He abandoned true historical principles which are based upon ancient and universal tradition for an hypothesis resting on a single, late, casual, and vague remark made by Cicero.

His Prolegomena is an attempt to establish his perverted interpretation of the saying of Cicero that Pisistratus made a collection of the Homeric poems. To his mind, Cicero meant to say that Pisistratus, not Homer, made the Iliad; that before the day of Pisistratus there was no Iliad, nothing but loose, disjointed poems which Pisistratus and his editors and his redactors patched together. In proof of his astonishing gloss of Cicero, he used two old arguments. First, he insisted that, as Homer could not write and the people could not read, it was impossible for him to compose, or for his disciples to remember and preserve, such a long poem as the Iliad. If Homer could have composed such a long epic, it

would have been like building a ship on land; there was no audience to appreciate the epic. The size and plan of the *Iliad* require a later, a writing, age for its production. No one could compose mentally, without the aid of writing, such a long poem. A man capable of composing such a long poem could not have lived in an age before writing was in use. Homer was not a poet, but a minstrel, one of many, whose songs Pisistratus combined in the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* was originally composed not to be read, but to be sung.

The other argument used by Wolf was derived from internal evidence. He thought he saw, in the text, seams where there had been breaks in the epic, cleavages that the editors under Pisistratus had but half concealed.

"The *Iliad* [he said] has the same tone of language, but on closer examination of its words and phrases, divergences appear."

For instance, Pylaemenes, who is slain in the fifth, reappears in the thirteenth book, following his son to burial; indeed, some of the heroes are killed several times. The polish of the *Iliad* is due to the care of the redactor, who, by omissions and additions, worked up the original lays into a great connected whole. The various readings found in the scholia of a Venetian codex of the *Iliad* published by Villoison were exploited for further proof of the multifarious origin of the epic. All this was said with singular moderation, and yet with great decision said in felicitous Latin phrases. The age was predisposed to adopt the theory that lays must precede epics, and it accepted as an accomplished fact the hypothesis so elaborately defended. If the book of two hundred and eighty pages had appeared in German with the Latin garb torn off, it would not have deceived the learned world as it did. Its specious, vague, and superficial arguments, its presentation of the definite results of sharp inves-

tigation, its universal erudition, flashing wit, and wonderfully bewitching style, all helped to carry conviction. He made the uncertain appear certain. His ideas seemed so original, so obvious and common-sense, that before the last page was reached, the reader was generally convinced.

Heyne wrote: "The ideas you present were suggested to me when I read Ossian," and Herder claimed that he had long known that the Iliad originated in rhapsodies, and that Homer is the name of a constellation of poets. Humboldt and Goethe read their Iliad through again to test Wolf's theory, and they declared that they were convinced of its truth. Philologists who understood neither poetry nor history, and philosophers who did not know Greek well enough to discover Wolf's mistakes, accepted his conclusions without hesitation. Fichte claimed that he had arrived at the same conclusions as those reached by Wolf, through his historical investigations, by the use of the *a priori* method. W. Müller, in his introduction to Homer in 1824, pronounced the Prolegomena as convincing as a mathematical demonstration.

"It contains truth drawn deeply from nature and the life of antiquity. These facts, so little known to the Greeks and Romans, can be questioned only by a presumptive idiot. Those who would reinstate Homer are not philologists, but misologists."

Schlegel, philosopher and art critic, objected to Wolf's philosophical taste, and knowledge of Greek poetry, but he nevertheless compared his book as a side piece to Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason."

"The Iliad is a work not conceived and executed [he said], but one that was born and grew naturally. It was the redactor who made the Iliad."

Niebuhr adopted Wolf's theory, and proceeded to reconstruct Roman history upon the basis of popular lays and bal-

lads. Wolf lived nearly thirty years after publishing his book, and yet no serious attempt had been made by a philologist to answer his argument. The argument was stated so powerfully that only powerful men could oppose it. He was Hellenic dictator for the nonce; and when opposition arose, Lachmann, famous for his edition of the Greek Testament, threw the whole weight of his enormous influence on Wolf's side, and with his pupil, Moritz Haupt, made the issue of the conflict uncertain fifty years longer.

Lachmann adopted Wolf's theory that epics are lays reduced to order, and applied it first to the *Nibelungenlied*. He restored that long epic into its original form of twenty lays, he exposed to view the fissures that the redactor had vainly sought to hide,—fissures whose existence no one had suspected till Lachmann called attention to them, defects such as a childish mind is delighted to have pointed out in a work that appears to be perfect. His keen eye discovered in the poem awkward junctures and apparent discrepancies, that revealed to him diversity of origin. So great was his authority and Haupt's, that as late as 1877 their theory was generally taught in German universities.

After his apparent success in dissecting the *Nibelungenlied*, Lachmann proceeded to analyze the *Iliad* in the same way, carrying out Wolf's suggestion in detail. He broke the *Iliad* up into eighteen lays. "It is not an individual poet that created the unities of the epic," he said, "but legends working unconsciously." He found the glory of the *Iliad* not in the whole epic with its symmetry and unity, but in the separate lays. The parts he accounted greater than the whole, for the lays were spoiled when they were squeezed into the mold of the epic. He laughed at those who talk, like women, of their dear Homer. In his work of disintegration, he drew sweeping con-

clusions from trivial objections, such as can be made against any great poet. He did not hesitate to say that the parts were ill-adjusted, that connections were senseless, that personages were inserted in the wrong place, that the description of arms, raiment, and feasts was useless, that there were frequent gaps, inequalities, yes contradictions. He felt compelled to exclude hundreds of lines, because of these apparent contradictions. No primitive poet could contradict himself as Homer does. For instance, one day the gods went to Ethiopia and the next they were at Troy. In one place mention is made of two gates in the Achæan wall, in another of only one. The ships of Aias are arranged first at the end of the line and then next to the Athenians.

This *tour de force* had its admirers, the crowd that counts more than it weighs, that worships a great name and wants to be considered in line with the advanced thought of the hour. The followers of Lachmann carried their master's method to further extremes, making breaks where they could not find joints, and subdividing his divisions, until by their complications they made his theory ridiculous. Koechly, one of these extremists, cut up Book II., as Lachmann himself admitted, in an impossible way.

To make the original ballads appear plainly, they were printed in different types. Lachmann said:

"I will publish these sections; that will be a sufficient answer to them. The method of the book seems to be strict, but it is really very arbitrary."

The anatomy of the epic differed from the one Lachmann had pointed out. The lays began and ended at different places. There was no end to invention, but there was no progress to the criticism of the Iliad in this way.

"Nothing is gained by analysis [as Professor Davis of Princeton,

speaking of Genesis, says] unless the documents discovered by it are inconsistent. The supreme question concerns the authenticity of these early narratives, and the debate is being made to rest more and more upon broader considerations than the analysis."

But Koechly maintained that Wolf's theory was the citadel and stronghold of Homeric studies, and he boasted that the European mind had recovered from the English superstition of the unity of the Iliad. When Schutze, in 1862, objected to Koechly's position, he admitted that the majority of scholars were against him.

The great Moritz Haupt insisted

"that the opinion of antiquity, that knew nothing of the origin of the Iliad, should not keep us from free and independent investigation,"

but he admitted that there were three vital questions which no one could answer.

"There would be no doubt left [he said] if it were possible to trace step by step how the idea of one author of the Iliad arose, how gradually the lay origin was forgotten, and when the original lays appeared."

Kirchoff, the authority on the Odyssey, printed, in 1859, an edition of that work in different types, to disclose the different original ballads out of which the epic had been composed. In 1865, Mark Pattison published an article in the *North British Review* in which he asserted that

"no scholar will again be able to embrace the unitarian hypothesis. Wolf's ideas are now the common property of the world, his main proposition has maintained itself unshaken and his views are continually gaining ground."

F. A. Paley, author of "Annotations on the Iliad," asserted that there was no Iliad before the days of Pisistratus, and that all earlier allusions to the Iliad are interpolations. Paul Cauer proclaimed his adherence to the school of Lachmann, and H. C. Benicke discovered an author for each lay. The anti-

quarian Schoemann declared that the Trojan war belonged to the domain, not of history, but of fable. H. Bonitz, an authority on Plato, expressed his satisfaction with the separation of the Iliad into different lays, because in that way all contradictions were made to disappear. Even Renan was swept off his feet by the tide of scholarship, but he "wondered at the genius of the compilers who had done their work so cleverly that the junctures hardly ever appear." Max Müller also was deluded, for he said that the battle of Troy was "a battle between the sun and the clouds." Our American professor, Henry Hedge, was caught in the current, and as late as 1886 he said, "The Iliad is not the work of art; Homer was not a poet, but a singer."

Such has been the apparent triumph of Wolf's higher criticism of Homer, but from the first his position was questioned. For a generation, no Greek scholar outside of Germany assented to the new opinion. Men like Humboldt, Goethe, and Boeckh, who had first adopted the new hypothesis, upon further reflection rejected it. Literary men, among them the leading poets of Germany, protested against it vehemently. Voss, the translator of the Iliad, was angry because Wolf did not produce in detail his promised proofs in defense of his position, and he charged him with playing on the surface and he denounced him for making Homer a gatherer and a patch-maker.

"No, the Iliad and Odyssey are branches of one tree [he said to Wolf]. You smile. Ask Klopstock and Goethe. I will not attack your citadel. I will go around it. Homer composed those two unities, or inner proofs prove nothing. It would be purely impossible for Homer, to say nothing of Pisisstratus, to produce the Iliad out of ballads. If Homer could not write, he was all the greater. At first I took your book as a joke. It is a mere assumption of a dim impression without proof."

Voss argued thus till he made Wolf's head ache.

Schiller sustained Voss's position.

"You may count up the fathers of the *Iliad*, but it had only one mother, and that is nature. If Homer had not the testimony of a thousand years behind him, he could not stand in reputation before these critics. It is hard for them to maintain their rules in presence of his example, and his renown in presence of their rules. It is essentially barbarous to tear the *Iliad* to shreds, and to say that rhapsodists strung lays together to form the *Iliad*."

Goethe admitted to Schiller that he had returned to his original convictions.

"I am more than ever convinced [he said] of the unity and indivisibility of the *Iliad*, and there is no man living or ever will live who can change this conviction. I prefer to think of the *Iliad* as a whole, to feel it joyfully as a whole. There is too much subjective in this whole business. It is interesting to doubt, but it is not edifying. These gentlemen are laying waste the most fruitful garden of the earthly kingdom. They have taken away from us all veneration. It is pernicious to compare the *Nibelungenlied* with the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* is so round and complete, they may say what they will, that nothing can be added to it, or taken from it."

Walter Scott would not listen to Wolf's views, and De Quincey remarked that Wolf had "raised a ghost he could not lay." Mrs. Browning said:

"Wolf's an atheist,
And if the *Iliad* fell out, as he says,
By mere fortuitous concourse of old songs,
We'll guess as much too for the universe."

Matthew Arnold made an elaborate defense of Homer.

"The insurmountable obstacle in the way of believing that the *Iliad* combines the work of several poets [he said] is this: that the work of great masters is unique. The nobleness of manner of the grand style characterizes Homer. The *Iliad* has fire, grandeur, and pathos. The grand style is found where a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or severity a serious subject. The high seriousness of absolute sincerity is the test of supreme merit in poetry. Nobody can separate the *Iliad* except with scissors. It is as much a unity as the *Æneid* or *Paradise Lost*. Could several poets

produce such literary conformity? Who were these wonderful anonymous writers?

"There is only one great anonym in English Literature. Wolf's new broom was much admired, and swept clean, but the criticism of Homer is now seen to have been but a current episode, a passing breeze, a trick of the century. To suppose the later origin of the poems is to credit the later Greeks with a power of historical imagination, and with means of archaeological research, such as have hardly been equaled in the history of the world. How could they throw themselves into a *description* of the past without allowing a single anachronism to escape them? The poem reached its present shape in the alembic of a great mind, by the genius of a great poet, or through fortuitous concourse, ages long, among a people bright, but not one of them a supreme genius in the days of Pisistratus. It is better to lay down the microscope and take up the field-glass and observe the grand plan and execution possible only to great poetical genius. As John Wilson said: some believe in twenty Homers. I believe in one. Nature is not so lavish of her great poets. What terrible learning which discovers so much. In the German mind as in the German language, there does seem to be something splay, something blunt-edged, unhandy, infelicitous, some positive want of straightforward sure perception. Great learning is inadequate to cope with any nice literary problems. An oversupply of unvitalized facts may prove disastrous to criticism. The critic of poetry should have fine tact, nicest moderation, most free, flexible, and elastic imagination."

Saint Beuve agrees with Matthew Arnold and asks:

"Can we believe that there was such an epoch when the Homeric genius without a Homer was in the air and rolled here and there like a divine tempest?"

Michael Breal, in a French review of 1903, said:

"An age that believed in Ossian attributed to popular inspiration the *Iliad*, with its theme treated progressively, with its invariable meter and its verses of irreproachable facture. Are we to suppose that the Greeks could not prepare manuscripts as well as the Egyptians? Oral propagation would never have preserved an Epic poem, for it preserves nothing and disfigures everything. The result of criticism is to cut off the most beautiful part of the poem under pretense of restoring the primitive form. The hexameter is fixed while popular meters are not responsive to law. No versifier could put old songs into one hexameter. The French Academy of Inscriptions could not do it. The meter is a sufficient reply to Lachmann. Such a masterpiece presupposes not only a rare poetical genius, but also

a long finished form, a poet and a tradition. The tradition gives the meter, the vocabulary, the grammatical forms, epithets and paragraphs. Homer represents not an infant, but a mature age. Folk songs are short dialogues, not narrations and descriptions. They lack consecutive and elaborate scenes. The *Iliad* is opposed to all that."

It may be claimed by "higher critics" that poets are not proper judges of poetry, and that professors of belles-lettres are not competent to pass on a literary question. Surely the historians of Greece have a right to be heard on this historical question. Grote declared that

"the attempt to resolve the *Iliad* into separate unities had signally failed. There is no sense in taking a work that is actually a unity and declaring that it originated from atoms, not originally designed for the places they now occupy. The *Odyssey* was molded at one projection. Very few passages of the *Iliad* are completely separable. Are we to be imposed upon by the folly that Onamocritus and his fellows put lays together and were the first to create the idea of the *Iliad*? There is some plausibility in these reasonings of Wolf so long as the discrepancies are looked upon as the whole of the case, but they are not the whole of the case. Wolf explained gaps and contradictions, but he explained nothing else, and he introduced greater difficulties than he removed."

Mahaffy of Dublin admitted that there was a reaction toward the belief in the unity of the *Iliad*.

"Comparative philology [he says] has been made more of than positive Greek. The actual effect of criticism on the intellectual world has been slight compared with its pretensions. The tradition of antiquity is large and straightforward from the beginning. We are asked to believe that twelve thousand lines came down unbroken, the delight of all the ages, without a personality of its own. Supreme poets have always appeared at times of vigorous national movement."

J. B. Bury, in his history published in 1900, says:

"In the ninth century B.C., a poet of supreme genius came into being, the real Homer. He was no mere stringer together of ancient lays, he was the father of the epic. His was conscious art, as great poetry always is."

Vol. LXV. No. 259. 10

In several numbers of the *Contemporary Review* for 1905, Dr. Emil Reich pours out his contempt on the "higher critics" of Homer.

("They have tried to refine grand old Homer with their uncouth learning and counting syllables. The redactors covered up their compiling and cobbling the best way they could, but the higher critics were too sharp for them.")

The protest of the poets, essayists, and historians, of men of the broader view, against the theories of Wolf and Lachmann, was not without effect on philologists. When they saw the foundations of Wolf's theory swept away one by one, they gradually abandoned the theory itself. The discomfiture of the Romantic school, when it applied its theory of folk songs to German epic poetry, was complete. In 1855, A. Holtzmann defended the unity of the *Nibelungenlied* against Lachmann. He appealed to the general public to say if the lay theory was not degrading to a great poet. Zacher, in his reply, said:

"This question can be solved only by specialists. Lachmann's writings are esoteric. You cannot understand him even if you are well posted. He is so esoteric that you must converse with him before you can understand him."

When Lachmann died, Jacob Grimm in a funeral oration took occasion to dissent from his treatment both of the *Nibelungenlied* and of the *Iliad*, saying, that with longer reflection he had ceased to share Lachmann's point of view.

The great German weeklies *Germania* and the *Literatur Centralblatt* inaugurated against Lachmann's theory a campaign in which the public journals generally joined. In 1887, J. Müller claimed that nearly all critics of the *Nibelungenlied* were opposed to Lachmann's views. Two years later, W. Müller pronounced Lachmann's position false, and in 1896 Madrousky announced that Lachmann's hypothesis had no advocate.

With this utter defeat of Lachmann's scheme, as applied to the *Nibelungenlied*, the defeat of the same scheme as applied to the *Iliad* was inevitable, and the attack upon it was made by Greek scholars as soon as it was announced. Ruhnken, to whom Wolf dedicated the *Prolegomena*, wrote:

"While I read I assent, but when I close the book I withdraw my assent; after repeated reading, I can hardly say that you are right."

Wytttenbach, the author of an index to Greek literature, called Wolf "a bag of wind." Humboldt wrote:

"Your argument is too subjective; you should have begun with proofs of variety of style and speech."

Heyne insisted that the theory was only "a possibility, a straw on the ocean, not a vessel to cross in." Boeckh at once withdrew his support of the new theory when he discovered Greek inscriptions before the time of Solon.

Crusius, who wrote an introduction to Müller's introduction to Homer, intimated that

"the voices against the old faith of all Greece are not trusted. We don't see how the one poem came from so many poets and how art came from nature. A Homer of the time of Pisistratus is as strange as one four hundred years earlier. Wolf's torso was the admiration and vexation of the learned. Then began a slaughter of the *Iliad*. Every one cut and hacked it to pieces."

But as the barriers of rationalism gave way to orthodoxy again, so the extravagances of the Wolfians gave way to the old view of Homer. Ernest Friedländer, in his "*Homeric Criticism*," refers to

"the almost microscopical observation of *cæsuras* and *hiatuses*." "It is lamentable [he says] that so much industry and care should be devoted to the discovery of these petty facts that prove nothing at all. So much is said to have come from others, perhaps not a word was Homer's. The idea of dating a lay by the use of a preposition found in it."

H. Lehrs, who wrote on the "*Unity of the Odyssey*," declared,

"It is not right to rob Greek literature of the high development of the Epic. The planning of a great poem with such calm dignity is impossible to many, and never granted except to the most gifted and noble individuals of our race."

Weisse said:

"It is easier to suppose that one wrote all the lays, for how could so many agree on the same theme. Magisterial utterances will terrify none but children. Those who look for contradictions are sure to find them. Lachmann separates the genuine from the false according to his taste."

Visher, author of a work on æsthetics that appeared in 1845, made the keen remark that

"Homer would never have been honored as he has been if he had been the author of disconnected lays."

Krüger, editor of a Greek grammar, mentioned the fact that "the *particles* of the Iliad, are so rich and full of art that they presuppose a preparatory period of a *thousand* years." G. W. Nitzsch, who devoted his *life* to the overthrow of Wolf's theory, said in 1853 that "no poem like the Iliad was ever made up out of *many* shorter poems. It is not patch-work, but the finest product of art." George F. Schoemann, who wrote a book on Greek antiquities in 1855, announced that

"Grote had silenced forever the opinion that there was no Iliad before Pisistratus."

H. Düntzer, who returned from the exposition of Goethe to that of Homer in 1866, said that

"the Iliad is not a melting down of many little songs, but the creation of one inspired soul. Here is a great poetical unity, developed from a germ and all its parts lead symmetrically to the whole. This dark partizanship which cares for victory not of truth, but of its theory, is the worst enemy of progress. Parties are sharply opposed to each other on the arena of blustering ambition. Kirchoff is blind with passion. Bonitz, who is excellent in dealing with Plato, is one-sided and superficial when he deals with Homer. The lay theorists find it hard to locate the beginning of their lays. Their proposition is contrived to suit their hypothesis. They make an effort to support their theory, not to understand the Iliad. The ancients knew of no

lay writers. The first condition of criticism is regard for tradition, but they have no sense for anything except contradiction."

Kammer, who defended the unity of the *Odyssey* against Steinthal and Kirchoff, said in 1873:

"The *Iliad* is the known work and new creation of the poet. If Homer had been only a collector of old songs, he would not have had the fame the Greeks and all other nations have given him. Lachmann is onesided and topsyturvy. Pisistratus was not a redactor. Homer wrote the *Iliad* complete."

G. Bernhardt, author of a sketch of Greek literature, said in 1874:

"No one to-day agrees with Wolf as to the existence of a redactor in the age of Pisistratus. It is easy to cut the *Iliad* to pieces, but who could have put it together. The hand that wounds cannot heal. The suggestion of a Pisistratus is hardly to be taken seriously. The critics cannot get rid of Homer. It is inconceivable that such art and unity could have been the work of many. There is no such thing as an unorganic product put together by a redactor. The great epic is an organic product. All the great Greek writers from Pindar to the Alexandrians knew of only one Homer. Wolf rejected historical tradition and overvalued a vague testimony in favor of a prejudiced opinion of his own. Wolf's solution is an hypothesis, and no hypothesis settles all difficulties. Nowhere is more care needed, nowhere are opinions more apt to change."

The learned Dane Madvig, in his introduction to Nutzhorn's volume on the *Iliad*, observes:

"Wolf did not prove his point thoroughly, but put higher criticism into a false rut. He did not explain facts clearly and comprehensively, nor did he lead to a conclusion. He questioned the genuineness of some of Cicero's orations and ignored linguistic and aesthetic phenomena. He was superficial and erroneous. He treated Homer negatively. He had no positive construction. He did not study the age of Pisistratus to see whether it was a literary age capable of doing what he claimed Pisistratus did. I do not hesitate to say that everything points to the unity of the *Iliad*, and that it was known as a whole from the first. Wolf and others overlook in a remarkable way the development of Greek literature. This literature presupposes the *Iliad* as a whole. Unity is the only explanation of the uninterrupted progress from stage to stage and of the easy tone of the narration. Wolf has an unclear view of popular poetry. In-

dividuals produce popular poetry as all other. The form of the Iliad depended on the people and the age when it appeared. Occasionally a strong and imposing mind appears surrounded by a crowd of parasites, who by imitation create an impression of originality. Many thoughtful people do not recognize this fashion of opinion, but, half in fear and half in irony, they avoid it. The majority of German philologists are not against my view. Lachmann applied a peculiar, arbitrary, æsthetic standard to the Iliad. The Iliad gives law to the Epic, but, according to him, it violates this law. That which delighted generations of Greeks may have been composed by a Greek. There seems to be a microscopic search for disagreements and strange reasoning as to what the poet must have regarded as probable or not. Boldest conclusions are drawn inductively from short, broken, self-contradictory statements. The power of unity in the Iliad itself overwhelms all these objections."

Nutzhorn, whom Madvig thus introduced, traces the two schools of criticism to two principles: one of nature, the other of personality; one of development, the other of preconceived plan; one of patch-work, the other of art work. The erroneous starting-point leads to a false goal, he says. "Critics examine not the Iliad, but opinions concerning the Iliad. Poetry is for poets, not for philologists with their petty spirit." In 1874, Volkman reviewed the "history of the higher criticism of Homer," and declared that

"all of Wolf's ideas had been proved untenable. Differences of language are accidental, criteria not capable of leading to any agreement as to the age of the different parts of the Iliad. Writing is an original act of the human spirit, the foundation of all culture, and there can be no civilization without it. The argument that, because other literatures begin with the ballad, therefore Greek literature does, is taking and apparently probable, yet on nearer examination proves untenable."

J. S. Blackie, the learned Scotch professor, said:

"Germans got into the habit of pulling all literary documents to pieces, as a sacrifice to a fixed idea or as an exhibition of erudite ingenuity. As devil's advocates they *found* flaws in all written traditions or *made* them. The mighty gaps in the Iliad, that Wolf found, proved to be superficial scratches, and one or two small cracks, which neither shake the cohesion of the parts nor annihilate the unity of the plan. It is a titanic exhibition of fruitless learning due

to a peculiar vice of the German intellect, analogous to the curious and profound subtlety in legal minds, which makes them incapable of dealing with broad questions. Much learning has made them super-subtle, curious, captious, impractical. They are trained to magnify differences till they have lost the sense of likeness. They explain the process by which the web was woven when they discover a few rents and expose a few patches. Vulgar rhapsodists may have sown a beggar's patch upon the purple robe of Homer. The *Iliad* must be a unity or a vamping. Wolf impugns that fine coherence of parts, that subtle delicacy of one presiding soul, which is felt and acknowledged in Milton, Angelo, and Shakespeare. This unity exists because the poem exists, and makes the impression of one great whole. It is not enough to prove petty flaws and trivial incongruities or a few interpolations to mar the beauty. There are interpolations in 'Iphigenia in Aulis,' but Euripides is the author. Koechly's elaborate use of the Homeric concordance to throw suspicion on the genuineness of any passage has not produced the slightest effect on my mind. If the general plan of the book be maintained, the special attacks lose their point. Scholarly criticism is more than ingenious conjecture. We have the tradition of long centuries in our favor and not one substantial reason against us. Possession is nine points of the law, and he who wishes to shake an old received doctrine out of its consistency must be prepared to bring something more weighty to bear against it than clever guesses and well-devised possibilities. The *Iliad* was not manufactured by certain literary joiners and dovetailers in the age of Pisistratus. Spectacle erudition and critical ingenuity fight a battle against poetic insight, healthy human feeling, and common sense. Wolf is in my judgment almost altogether wrong. Homer could no more have invented Agamemnon than he could have invented Jupiter. If separate materials existed before Homer, the bond that connected them also existed. Wolf treats too lightly the tradition that Cadmus introduced letters long before the days of Homer. The issue depends upon the actual discovery of insignificant gaps and clumsy joinings, which the sharp eyes of Wolf and the microscopic inspection of others boast to have discovered everywhere in what to Aristotle appeared the very compact and well-jointed framework of the *Iliad*. If anywhere among human compositions we have a grand imaginative plan and a grand consecutive execution of that plan, we have them here. This *Iliad* gives as plain an impression of unity as *Paradise Lost* or Haydn's *Creation*. The Greeks did not honor Pisistratus as Wolf does. If there are fissures in the poem, then the *Iliad* is a piece of cunning patchwork, no more genuine than the *Fingal* of McPherson. Wolf is altogether wrong in starting with the presumption that if possible a want of

originality is to be supposed. This perverse principle accounts for a great amount of that impertinent and illogical ingenuity which has been wasted on this. No one can persuade me that there were so many great poets in Greece and that all wrote on the same theme. Unless a matter is satisfactorily proven to me, I am not accustomed to follow the authority of other men, however learned they may be. Names do not frighten me, nor a great consensus of them, nor the confidence with which they express their opinion. They say that the *Iliad* was made from many lays. If their divisions are examined according to the rules of poetic art, they appear of no value. I say that all the *Iliad* came from one fountain."

W. Christ, who edited the *Iliad* in 1885, says :

"The faith of two thousand years in Homer as poet of all time was shattered by Wolf, but now nearly all have abandoned him and believe in an original plan to account for the wonderful unity of the *Iliad*. One great thought must have come through one great personality. The statistical philologists of to-day prove wonders by counting forms and words."

To the same effect J. Müller wrote in 1887 :

"In the delicate question of literary criticism, enumerations and catalogues of words do not suffice to give objective certainty."

Butcher and Lang recognized the unity of Homer's epics, and D. B. Munro, in 1891, says that

"The *Odyssey* is the work of one poet and is a connected logical masterpiece of construction. The story of Pisistratus is merely a mythical anecdote. The *a priori* improbability of Lachmann's theory is so great as to outweigh any arguments in its favor."

S. Reinach, the orientalist, says :

"The higher critics have robbed Homer of his character, pilloried him as an impudent plunderer of other men's wits, and finally proved that he never existed at all. Because a man can read Greek or French, is he capable of writing a history of Greece or France? Only historians can handle history. The critics make up for insufficient evidence by the incantation of high-sounding names, and impose on the public by the display of the paraphernalia of erudition."

Leaf and Byfield, in their edition of Homer in 1898, said :

"The Achæans, before the Dorian invasion of 1000 B.C., left us as their heirloom the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. These poems have

often been compared with ballad poetry of other nations, it is now generally recognized that this comparison is radically false. They are not the outcome of a young and primitive people, but rather of a civilization which was approaching its fall."

R. B. Jebb, in a recent volume, says:

"The language of the *Iliad* and the substance of the *Iliad* testify to its high antiquity. Here Mount Ida lifts her head in the East, and there the peak of Samothrace arises in the West. The wheat, the reeds, the elms, the willows, and the tamarisks, the cry of the heron, the dark plumage of the eagle, and the flight of cranes are here, as in Homer's day. The Greeks knew the Phœnicians as early as 1100 B.C. It seems unlikely that the Greeks, with their bright wit, their quickness in taking hints, should have allowed many centuries to have gone by before they caught up this art of writing from Phœnicians. The literature of Greece and Europe begins with Homer's poems, which are works of mature poetic art. They are united in a form and style all their own—they have the freshness and simplicity of a primitive age, and yet are free from the defects of primitive literature. There is nothing in them that is grotesque, ignoble, slow or monotonous. Matthew Arnold characterizes the style of the *Iliad* as rapid, plain in thought, plain in diction, and noble. Cowper is not rapid in his translation of the *Iliad*, nor is Chapman plain in thought in his. Pope is not plain in diction, and Morris is not noble in his version. The general result reached by criticism is this: the original nucleus of the *Iliad* was a series of lays by a great poet who fixed the main incidents of the story, and left to others room to enlarge and complete it. The *Iliad* stood as to-day before 770 B.C."

The deathblow was given to the theory of Wolf and Lachmann when the hieroglyphs of Egypt and the cuneiform tablets of Nineveh were deciphered, and especially when the ruins of Troy, Mycænæ, and Cnossos were explored by Schliemann and Evans. These men opened up a history that was unknown to Wolf.

C. L. Roth, in his Greek history, 1891, says:

"Homer gives a picture of the Greeks in the twelfth century B.C. Schliemann had revealed the life of the still earlier Mycænæan Age. His excavations prove, as the *Iliad* does, that there was a common culture in Greek lands. The ornaments of Mycænæ protect Homer's description of the shield of Achilles from the charge of being fantastic."

N. Koehler wrote in 1897:

"We know now by excavation what Herodotus and Thucydides knew only by tradition."

Basil L. Gildersleeve, at the Philological Congress at Philadelphia in 1900, in referring to the changes of view that had taken place in fifty years, spoke of "the reinstatement of Homer, pen in hand."

V. Berard spent years in the eastern Mediterranean. With modern charts and instructions to seamen he traced with his own eyes the course of the voyage of Ulysses as unfolded in the *Odyssey*. In 1902 he published his conclusions in two sumptuous volumes.

"We use the entire poem [he says] as if really the personal work of a Homer whose every concept and word must be respected. I believe that Wolf's theories have had their day, and that we must return to an explanation more human. With our marine charts and nautical instructions we have proved the minute exactness and faithfulness of the *Odyssey*. Crete has furnished a thousand inscribed bricks in both monumental and cursive script. Ramses II., the Pharaoh of the oppression, mentions the Achæans. Scarabs of Queen Ti, as early as 1430 B.C., have been found both at Crete and at Mycæne."

In reviewing Berard's volumes, Michael Breal thus refers to the Homeric question:

"The debate was ended, when the excavations raised the question again. The excavations proved the truth and reality of the epic. Under the Troy of Homer there are layers of earlier civilizations."

The *Classical Review* for 1904, in an article by E. A. Gardner, says:

"Since Doerpfeld's book on Troy appeared, the most sceptical can no longer doubt that the walls of the sixth period must represent the Troy of the *Iliad*."

The *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1905, remarks:

"It will probably be admitted that destructive methods of criticism are growing out of date and out of place in connection with the *Odyssey*. Not only is the poet literally exact in his description of his

hero's wanderings, but every bit of knowledge provided by the antiquary, the traveler, and the excavator can now be added to the proofs of Homer's accuracy. We believe the time has come when broader views of the Homeric question may be taken with advantage to every one who cares for poetry or ancient civilization. Doctor Paley still maintains Wolf's thrice dead theory, but he is a melancholy exception."

W. M. Ramsay writes in 1905:

"No scholar would now employ the argument that the composition of the *Iliad* must belong to a comparatively late day, because such a continuous poem could not come into existence without the ready use of writing,—an argument which formerly seemed to tell strongly against the early date assumed by tradition for its origin. The difficulty originated in our ignorance. No doubt can now be entertained that writing was known and familiarly practised in the eastern Mediterranean lands long before the date to which Greek tradition assigned the composition of the great poems. A. J. Evans, at Cnossos, has found ink written inscriptions on vases 1800 years B.C., and he infers the existence of writing on papyrus or other perishable matter, since ink was not made merely for terra cotta vases. Paper was used in Egypt 3000 years B.C. Ignorance of writing points not to a primitive, but to a degraded race."

J. D. Seymour, in his "Life in the Homeric Age," 1907, maintains:

"The early elements of the Homeric poems may be as old as the close of the second millennium B.C. Helbig in his great work on Homer's Poems as elucidated by the monuments declares that for his purposes he was obliged to treat the poems as a unit. Of recent years scholars are abandoning the view of Lachmann. The stamp of a great personality seems to be on each of the two great poems."

Andrew Lang, in *Blackwood's* for January, 1908, says that there is "nothing more striking than the uniform splendor with which the *Iliad* is written."

I have thus traced the fortunes of the "higher criticism" of Homer since the appearance of Wolf's *Prolegomena* a hundred years ago. It suggests an interesting parallel to the course of the "higher criticism" of Moses since the appearance of the *Prolegomena* of Wellhausen. Both begin with

philologists who scorn theology; both start with a large supply of assumptions. When Liddon asked Döllinger what he thought of Wellhausen, he replied:

“I counted the assumptions he made until I could stand it no longer, and I put the book down.”

Both men broke with ancient and universal tradition; both invented editors and redactors, one in the age of Pisistratus, the other in the age of Ezra. Both built up a scheme upon a single statement, which they perverted,—one upon a casual remark of Cicero’s, the other upon the account of the discovery of the book of the law. Both divided and subdivided the text, and proclaimed interpolations and contradictions in a subjective, arbitrary, and self-contradictory manner. Both furnished editions with the original documents distinguished by different types. Both excelled in the use of the concordance and the mechanical tabulation of words. Both obtained control of the chairs of universities, and boasted that the scholarship of the world was with them. Both had to face the difficulty of accounting by their hypothesis for the fame of the book and author; and the further difficulty of supposing that writers of a later age could have made up ancient history so surprisingly well. Both faced the difficulty which Moritz Haupt admitted, namely, the impossibility of tracing step by step how the idea of one author arose, how gradually the manifold origin was forgotten, and when the original parts appeared. Finally, both were overwhelmed by the discovery of ancient literatures, a discovery that traversed every position that they had taken. The friends of Homer have silenced the “higher critics” of the Iliad; the friends of Moses may silence the “higher critics” of the Pentateuch, if they will.